

RFP NNA04031827R-GVW

Questions and Answers

Set 3 – May 6, 2004

Revised May 7, 2004

PREFACE: The questions identified in this Set 3 reflect the last of those received by the Government to date. Responses to some of these questions are still in-process; however, the Government wants to identify the questions in-hand and respond with the notation **RESERVED** for those still being worked. Answers to those questions should be forthcoming shortly. *The Q&A Set 3 posted on May 6 was withdrawn on May 7 to rework responses to certain questions. This revised Q&A Set 3 will identify those answers withdrawn by the bolded red, italicized notation **RESERVED**.*

GENERAL

Q66: The ASRS, PSRS, and SIRS work are conducted in closed environments for obvious reasons. We have found that it is exceedingly difficult to obtain the detailed technical information to write a competitive Understanding the Requirement section of our Mission Suitability volume. Because Mission Suitability is the most important proposal volume, we request that the Government establish a reading library at ARC that contains the documents indicated below. *(The list has been omitted.)* We are concerned that, without access to this documentation set, the non-incumbent bidders are placed at a considerable competitive disadvantage. This library should include the capability to photocopy the provided documents (at the bidder's expense).

A66: **RESERVED**. A number of the documents requested are new requirements for this procurement; thus, there are no existing documents that can be provided.

Q67: Is the list of reference materials limited to the ones listed in the RFP?

A67: **RESERVED**.

Q68: Will the Security Plan be made available?

A68: **RESERVED**.

Q69: In the Government's opinion, is any part of the present ASRS or PSRS system considered to be "Battelle Proprietary" software, data, procedures, etc. that may go away when another contractor takes over the contract?

A69: No.

Q70: Will the functions scheduled for the ISDRS contract be part of the ASRS contract during its first year?

A70: No.

Q71: Are there interdependencies between ASRS IT and ISDSR IT development efforts?

A71: No.

Q72: What limited immunity does the PSRS System provide to VA Personnel?

A72: **RESERVED**

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Q73: How would you propose to extend this immunity beyond the VA System?

A73: **RESERVED**

Q74: Will the selected contractor be released from liability to the government or any 3rd party in the performance of project tasks under the scope of the ASRS project?

A74: No, the Government will not release the contractor from potential liabilities to the government or third parties. Offerors are advised to consider the potential risks of liability in the performance of this contract and determine whether commercial liability insurance is appropriate.

STAFFING

Q75: Since SIRS is being developed, does the contractor have to propose the SIRS staff in year 1 of the effort, or will the final RFP give some indication of a potential time frame for a CTO to cover SIRS support?

A75: Offerors are not required to propose staff members for the SIRS Reporting System in their proposals. However, they should propose a SIRS program manager. It is anticipated that in FY05, three SIRS WYE will be needed, which includes the program manager.

Q76: Can a new contractor propose members of the Incumbent Contractor staff for filling key positions of Expert Analysts?

A76: Yes.

Q77: Does the new contractor have to show the names of these individuals?

A77: The offeror is required to provide names and other information on only those individuals that it considers to be Key Personnel. See Section L of the RFP.

Q78: Does the new contractor have access to these individuals before the proposal due date?

A78: The Government does not provide access to the incumbent contractor staff.

Q79: What is the ratio of Expert Analysts (i.e., pilots, ATC, etc.) to Functional Specialists (i.e., human factors specialists, statisticians, operations researchers, etc.)?

A79: The ratio varies. The requirements for personnel are stated in the SOW.

Q80: Will the final RFP have a break-down by numbers and skill area the types of staff NASA wants for the Expert Analysts?

A80: No. The requirements for personnel are stated in the SOW. The offeror will propose the staff needed to meet the requirements of the RFP.

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- Q81: What staffing levels does the incumbent have? ASRS expert analysts? PSRS expert analysts? Publications personnel? IT Personnel?
- A81: The number varies. The requirements for personnel are stated in the SOW. The offeror will propose the staff needed to meet the requirements of the RFP.
- Q82: How many IT personnel are on the existing contract?
- A82: See the answer to question 81.
- Q83: What percentage of current ASRS contractor staff is retired from previous aviation careers (e.g., retired pilots, air traffic controllers, etc.)?
- A83: The percentage varies. The requirements for personnel are stated in the SOW.
- Q84: What percentage of current contractor staff is retired from previous medical careers (e.g., retired physicians, nurses, etc.)?
- A84: See the answer to question 83.
- Q85: What percent of current contractor staff are full-time employees vs. part-time employees?
- A85: Section L in the final RFP has been revised to include this information.
- Q86: Please explain the skills (education, years of experience) that the Program Managers in each program need to possess?
- A86: Refer to the SOW for personnel requirements. The Government chooses not to be more specific in the requirements for program managers as the number of years of experience and the specific skills and education could vary widely for a highly successful program manager for each of these systems.
- Q87: Who are the designated “Key Personnel” and what requirements or experience is needed for these positions.
- A87: The offeror will determine who will be designated as Key Personnel. The requirements for all personnel are specified in the SOW.
- Q88: Reference Section L.7, (b2) entitled Key Personnel states: “The offeror should also discuss the use of other-than key personnel...” Does this require us to specify:
- a. Numbers of personnel required by job types
 - b. Descriptions of the work performed by each job type
 - c. Qualifications for each job type (i.e., education and experience)
 - d. Sample resumes for all positions from present company personnel
- A88: The referenced section has been revised. Refer to the final RFP.
- Q89: Are there US citizenship/security requirements for contractor staff given that they work off-site?

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A89: All contractor staff members must be U.S. citizens or be legally documented to work in the United States. At present, there are no requirements for access to "classified information" as defined at FAR 2.102, so there is no DD Form 254 applicable to this procurement. However, the contractor will routinely have access to sensitive information, which is why a security plan for the program itself is required in addition to the plan for unclassified information technology discussed within NFS Subpart 1804.470, "Security requirements for unclassified information technology resources."

FACILITY

Q90: Is the cost of the required facility cost-reimbursable on the current contract?

A90: Yes. Please refer to paragraph L.5, "Accounting for Lease Costs," for additional information.

Q91: Would the Government consider a direct charge back for the facility costs or would they expect the facility costs to be built into the indirects?

A91: The Government requires only that any facility leasing costs comply with FAR Part 31 and Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 13, "Accounting for Leases."

Q92: Is there a requirement that the facility be shared with or in proximity to other AOM staff?

A92: No.

Q93: The requirements state that Expert Analysts should be able to make calls in an environment that ensures privacy and confidentiality. Are there specific guidelines for satisfying that need when the Expert Analysts are talking to the Reporters?

A93: See the SOW for these guidelines. The contractor will propose how the guidelines will be specifically enacted, with concurrence from NASA.

Q94: What is the specific level of security required for the facility?

A94: Refer to the SOW and the Minimum Security Considerations attachment in Section C.

Q95: In addition to the security precautions for the entire facility are there any additional considerations for security inside the building?

A95: There are requirements for IT security as well as security for the handling and storage of reports until they reach their destruction date. See the answer to question 94.

Q96: Is the contractor expected to have a secure records storage area within its facility (to store received reports) until they are destroyed?

A96: Not necessarily; however, access to these secured records may be necessary on short notice.

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Q97: Are all members of the Incumbent Contractor staff currently located within 10 minutes of Ames?

A97: **RESERVED**

Q98: Is it required to have all personnel working on this project be within 10 minutes of Ames Research Center?

A98: **RESERVED**

Q99: Does the Incumbent Contractor currently maintain a facility within 10 minutes of Ames?

A99: **RESERVED**

Q100: What is the square footage of the current contractor facility?

A100: The current contractor facility is approximately 9700 square feet. The size of the facility that the offeror proposes will depend on the proposed staffing and their functional requirements.

Q101: What percentage of the facility is occupied by ASRS, and what percentage is occupied by other programs?

A101: ASRS occupies approximately 66% of the 9700 square feet. PSRS is 26% and SIRS is 8%.

Q102: How many hard-walled offices are contained in the current facility?

A102: All offices in the current facility are hard-walled.

SOW

Q103: Approximately how many incident reports can an expert analyst handle per day when reviewing ASRS and PSRS reports?

A103: ASRS expert analysts each handle on average 10 to 15 reports a day; however, the amount of time a report requires is highly dependent on content. There is not an average report/day statistic for PSRS expert analysts at this time.

Q104: Does the Government consider the number of PSRS reports received to be sufficient to achieve the PSRS mission?

A104: The PSRS database is an ongoing collection of reports as is the ASRS database. Each report that provides content relevant to safety meets the “mission.” PSRS has received reports and continues to receive reports with important safety improvement content.

Q105: What is the business process in cases where the two experts required to review a report do not agree?

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A105: There is no written policy concerning this issue. However, attempts are made to resolve any differences in opinion. The goal is to equitably resolve the differences of opinion in order to provide the best information for safety improvement.

Q106: Is there a report tracking application that is currently being used?

A106: Yes, intricate report tracking is accomplished through a combination of paper records and the Analyst Workbench software.

Q107: An increasing number of reports are being transmitted electronically through Aviation Safety Action Programs (ASAP). Is the ASAP currently integrated with ASRS?

A107: Yes; approximately 30% of all ASRS reports are received from ASAP airlines. Currently, electronic data transmissions are made by two airlines. However, additional ASAP airlines will be using electronic data transmissions in the future.

Q108: Are any PSRS reports received electronically?

A108: No.

Q109: Will the contractor be responsible for the distribution of PSRS feedback? If so is the distribution cost recoverable?

A109: The Government is responsible for the printing and mailing costs related to the PSRS Feedback documents, which are written and formatted by the contractor.

Q110: Does NASA assemble the advisory committees for ASRS, PSRS and SIRS?

A110: NASA is responsible for the membership of these committees.

Q111: What is the contractor's role/responsibility with respect to facilitating advisory committee meetings and interacting with the advisory committees in general?

A111: Refer to the SOW.

Q112: Are there any documented criteria for selecting reports for full form processing?

A112: Refer to the SOW.

Q113: Will the SIRS System be built on the same hardware and software platform as ASRS?

A113: Yes, the SIRS Reporting System will utilize the same basic software and hardware specifications that are currently used for ASRS and PSRS.

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Q114: Reference Draft SOW Section III (L) (2) states: “The backup medium shall be located at a secure location away from the main Contractor facility to avoid any damage that may result from fire, earthquake, flood or other disasters”. Which of the following are acceptable?

- a. A Government ASRS facility at AMES
- b. A contractor facility at AMES that also houses another program. We could perhaps trade off-site storage with the other program.
- c. A commercial data warehousing service.

A114: The Government requires a secure location that is far enough away from the contractor’s facility that it would not be susceptible to same catastrophic events, such as earthquakes, floods, etc.

Q115: Reference Draft SOW Section VI (b) (3), Contingency Plan, states: “The plan shall accomplish the requirement of providing a reinstated database at 98% of pre-catastrophic condition”. It is unclear what is meant by 98% of the pre-catastrophic operating condition? Please clarify.

A115: The contractor must be able to restore 98% of the total contents of the database as it existed at the time of the catastrophe.

PAST PERFORMANCE

Q116: Reference L.7(b): “Major subcontractors...is defined as \$1 million, covering a performance period of five (5) years.” Also reference L.7(a)(3).c where the small business goals would translate for the life of a \$40M contract of SDB = \$3.2M, WOSB = \$2.0M, HUBZone = \$1.2M, VOSB = \$1.2M, and HBCU = \$1.2M. If a single subcontractor is proposed for each of these categories, this would result in 5 major subcontractors in the bid. The prime and each of the major subcontractors are to provide contracts information and questionnaires on 3 NASA contracts, 3 non-NASA government contracts, and 2 commercial contracts. In this example that would result in 48 total contracts. It would not appear that 25 pages is enough space to provide all the called-for information on the reference contracts. Would the Government consider reducing the Past Performance requirement?

A116: The referenced section has been revised. Refer to the final RFP.

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Q117: Reference L.7(b).(8).b.2&3: These bullets state that past performance questionnaires for 3 NASA contracts, 3 other contracts, and 2 commercial contracts should be provided for the prime contract and each major sub. This would be 8 contracts per major team member. In addition L.7.(b).(8).a.4 states for all relevant contracts and for all NASA contracts.... Specifically, it states all NASA contracts. As our team has significant NASA contractors, this could create a large amount of information. Therefore, is it acceptable to meet both these requirements as a team and focus our submission of contract information to 12-15 of the teams most relevant contracts?

A117: See the answer to question 116.

Q118: Reference M.2.d: For the past performance criteria, will the government consider relevant commercial experience and/or the experience of individuals proposed as important as past performance related to government projects?

A118: Yes. The Government will consider relevant commercial experience as important as relevant government experience.

Q119: Reference L.7.(b): One of our sub-contractors is a new company, but has nationally recognized individuals in very relevant fields. These are individuals with published works, PhDs, significant bodies of medical work and the like. Should past performance questionnaires be submitted related to these individuals?

A119: RESERVED.

SMALL BUSINESS GOALS

Q120: Please clarify the small business goal of *30% of total contract value compared to the five categories of small businesses listed and the individual goals for each category. The five individual goals only add to 22%. Are the individual goals (8% small disadvantaged business concern, 5% woman-owned small business concern, etc.) considered minimums by category and the total must add to 30% or should the total goal be 22%?*

A120: The total small business goal is 30% of the total contract value. The SDB, WOSB, HUBZone, VOSB and HBCU are percentages against the small business goal of 30%. The remaining 8% could be met by a small business that does not meet the criteria to be classified as SDB, WOSB, HUBZone, VOSB, or HBCU—or one or more of these small businesses could have a higher percentage than its goal. See the RFP "highlights" document for an evaluation example.

Q121: As long as the contractor meets the overall goal of 30%, must they meet each of the five sub goals listed in this section? For example, if a contractor met the overall 30% small business goal but did not include any HUBZone small business concerns, would the contractor be considered to meet the goals as required in this draft RFP?

A121: The contractor's subcontracting plan will be evaluated against the all of the subcontracting goals. Refer to Section M for evaluation factors and scoring.

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Q122: Regarding the SDB Participation scoring, if a contractor includes SDB concerns in their proposal but does not meet the full 30% goal identified by NASA, will they receive partial “credit” related to this evaluation category or will the scoring be an “all or nothing” score based on meeting the identified goal?

A122: See the answer to question 121.

Q123: The RFP for this opportunity contains small business participation requirements with such participation further divided among various types of small businesses such as SDB, Woman-Owned Small Business, etc. On a project of this size it may be difficult for a prime contractor to award meaningful and substantive work to multiple small businesses across multiple subdivisions. This offeror believes that awarding a larger percentage of work to a small business will allow that business to gain significantly more experience than were it to receive only one or two positions over the life of the contract. With that in mind, would the government consider using, in lieu of small business subdivision requirements, a general small business percentage requirement with no subdivisions?

A123: No.

Q124: Is the 10-percent Price Evaluation Adjustment available to a qualified 8(a)-SDB firm bidding as Prime on this RFP?

A124: Yes. See FAR Clause 52.219-23, "Notice of Price Evaluation Adjustment for Small Disadvantaged Business Concerns," in Section I.

Q125: Does an 8(a)-SDB firm bidding as Prime have to show its plan for meeting the WOSB, HUB zone, HBCU portion of the SDB goals of this RFP?

A125: **RESERVED**.

Q126: Will “Flow Through” be allowed so that primes will get credit for second or third tier subcontractors toward SDB Goals?

A126: No.

Q127: What Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZones) and HUBZone Businesses exist within 10 minutes of Ames?

A127: **RESERVED**

Q128: What HBCUs exist within 10 minutes of Ames?

A128: **RESERVED**

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SECTION F

Q129: Would the Government consider the use of an Award-Term contract where the successful bidder is awarded a base term of the contract (say 3, 4, or 5 years) but if their performance is rated at (or above) a specified level, additional years could be added on to the end of the contract?

A129: No.

Q130: Is the IT Security plan a deliverable with the proposal?

A130: No; refer to Section F of the RFP.

SECTION H

Q131: Reference H.4 (Release of contractor confidential business information (CBI): Can the contractor be notified in advance of what information will be released and the named individuals to whom this information will be released?

A131: No. As with most, if not all, of federal government agencies, NASA utilizes contractors in various functions including processing of invoices and contract closeout. We use this clause to alert other contractors that some of their data may be accessed by other contractors in performance of functions such as the ones described above. Contractors that access these kinds of data are required to utilize nondisclosure agreements or other forms of mitigation to reduce, if not eliminate, risks of inappropriate release of data.

SECTION L

Q132: Does the Draft ASRS/PSRS/SIRS Security Plan (limited to 10 pages) count as part of the 101 page limit for the Volume I, Mission Suitability Proposal or is it separate from this volume?

A132: The Draft ASRS/PSRS/SIRS Security Plan is a separate document and has its own separate page count of 10 pages.

Q133: Reference L.6: Are all plans included in the page count (Staffing plan, Total compensation plan, and phase-in plan)? Is a separate Management plan required? Clarification is desired not additional page count.

A133: The staffing plan, total compensation plan, phase-in plan and management plan are all included in the Mission Suitability Proposal page count.

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Q134: Will documentation and training be provided for the custom software packages used with ASRS and PSRS?

A134: It is suggested that offerors provide a plan for this training in their Phase-In Plans.

Q135: Reference L.6: Is a Safety and Health plan going to be required for this procurement? If it is, will it have separate evaluation points (for example 50pts)?

A135: No, a Safety and Health plan is not a deliverable.

Q136: At the pre-solicitation conference held at NASA Ames on March 19, 2004 the Government indicated that you wanted any possible exceptions to the proposed contract provisions resolved “before” the proposals were submitted. Please clarify. Do you want a separate submittal by bidders if we propose any changes to the contract terms and conditions? If so, when is this due? What format would you like these changes submitted? Would you prefer bidders simply submit any proposed changes to the contract terms and conditions along with their proposals? If so, are there any specific directions on how you would like these proposed changes submitted?

A136: Any exceptions to the RFP should be submitted and resolved prior to the proposal due date. Contact the Contract Specialist or Contracting Officer for specific instructions.

Q137: What is the vision for the oral presentations? All offerors on one day? Before/After the RFP is submitted?

A137: The requirements for the oral presentations are specified in Sections L in the final RFP.

SECTION M

Q138: Section M.3.c states: “Mission Suitability and Past Performance are most important, and, ... are approximately equal in importance. The Cost factor is somewhat less important ...” Because the incumbent contractor has held the ASRS contract since 1977, it will be difficult for any other bidder to have more relevant past performance credentials. Since the successful company will be retaining nearly all of the incumbent employees with their knowledge and experience, we believe the weight given to relevant experience is far too great. We suggest that Mission Suitability remain important, Cost be elevated above Past Performance and approximately equal in importance to Mission Suitability, and Past Performance be somewhat less important. Further, we request that Past Performance be evaluated based on the bidder’s demonstrated experience performing on and managing contracts of similar size and complexity; not on its “direct relevance.”

A138: **RESERVED**

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Q139: Reference M.3.d: Would the government consider reducing the technical weighting by 50 points and adding those points to the management weighting? Such a heavy weighting toward the technical factor seems to imply the company must have the direct experience with the ASRS and that superior management and staffing approaches could not adequately provide the services required by the contract.

A139: The referenced section has been revised. Refer to the final RFP.

Q140: Reference M.2.e.1-3: The government states the intent to do a probable cost adjustment. Therefore, will the government provide an Independent Government Estimate (IGE) of the staffing levels required by major Standard Labor Category (SLC) as related to the SOW sections? Or will the government provide the current staffing levels by SLC?

A140: An Estimated Staffing Provision has been added to Section L of the Final RFP.

Q141: Reference M.2.e.1-3: The government states the intent to do a probable cost adjustment. Will the government consider providing an IGE for ODC's related to items such as travel that is related to the direct operational support of ASRS, associated meetings, and required travel?

A141: The Government has provided current best estimates for ODCs in Section L of the Final RFP.

Q142: Reference M.2.e.1-3: The government states the intent to do a probable cost adjustment. Additionally, there is a possibility of award without discussion. In this situation, even if an IGE is provided of effort levels and ODC's, it is assumed the actual contract costs would form a substantial basis for that probably cost estimate. A bidder could be penalized for a cost that is either significantly higher or lower than the current costs. Therefore, is it possible that the offers either be provided a probably cost, or an oral discussion and revision of the cost proposal be allowed?

A142: The Government has provided current best estimates for ODCs and an Estimated Staffing Provision in Section L of the Final RFP.